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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

At the 3790th meeting of the Security Council, held on 19 June 1997 in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council has considered the matter of protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations and has given careful consideration to the views expressed in the debate on the matter at its 3778th meeting on 21 May 1997.

"The Security Council notes that massive displacement of civilian populations in conflict situations may pose a serious challenge to international peace and security. The Council, in seeking protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations, underlines the importance of pursuing a coordinated and comprehensive approach in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

"The Security Council expresses its grave concern at the recent increase in attacks or use of force in conflict situations against refugees and other civilians, in violation of the relevant rules of international law, including those of international humanitarian law. The Council reiterates its condemnation of such acts and once again calls upon all those concerned to comply strictly with the relevant rules of international law. In particular, it calls upon all parties concerned to ensure the safety of refugees, displaced persons and other civilians, and guarantee the unimpeded and safe access of United Nations and other humanitarian personnel to those in need.

"The Security Council also expresses its grave concern at all attacks or use of force against United Nations and other personnel associated with United Nations operations as well as personnel of humanitarian organizations, in violation of the relevant rules of international law, including those of international humanitarian law. In this context, the Council recalls its resolution 868 (1993) and the statement by its

President of 12 March 1997 (S/PRST/1997/13). It also recalls the Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel adopted by the General Assembly on 9 December 1994. In this context, it calls upon all parties concerned to ensure the safety and security of these personnel as well as personnel of humanitarian organizations, and encourages all States to consider ways and means to strengthen the protection of such personnel.

"The Security Council reminds all States and others concerned of the need to bring to justice those who violate international humanitarian law. In this context, it recalls the resolution on the establishment of an international criminal court adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 1996 (A/RES/51/207).

"The Security Council supports further exploration of ways and means by which the international community may enhance the compliance by parties concerned with the relevant rules of international law, including those of international humanitarian law.

"The Security Council encourages States to consider acceding to the relevant international conventions designed to address the problems of refugees.

"The Security Council underlines the importance of ensuring clear, appropriate and realistic mandates to be implemented in an impartial manner as well as adequate resources for United Nations peacekeeping operations. In this context, the Council, in establishing or authorizing an operation to protect humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations, reaffirms the principles of full respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the States concerned. The Council also underlines the importance of ensuring the proper discharge of the mandates conferred upon peacekeeping operations.

"The Security Council stresses the importance of ensuring closer coordination between the relevant United Nations bodies and other international agencies, acting in accordance with their own mandates and status, with a view to effectively providing or protecting humanitarian assistance to those in need. In this context, the Council encourages an enhanced role for the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General in coordination to this end.

"The Security Council stresses the importance of the activities of the relevant United Nations bodies, agencies and other international humanitarian organizations and the need for these activities to continue to be carried out in accordance with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian assistance.

"The Security Council also stresses the importance of crisis prevention, including by addressing the root causes of such crises. It therefore encourages the Secretary-General and all States to look further into practical ways to enhance the United Nations capacity and capability in this regard.

"The Security Council encourages the Secretary-General to study further how to improve the protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations."